



# The Green Sheet

Central Pennsylvania Golf Course Superintendents Association

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NORTHEAST REGIONAL UPDATE

## Temper Expectations for New Turf

August 16, 2024

Brian Gietka, agronomist, East Region

Golf course renovation work has been common throughout the country over the past couple of years. While these projects are exciting, and in many cases long overdue, the young turf can decline during summer. Throughout the Northeast, the temperatures and humidity have been high for many weeks. In my recent travels, a common theme has been renovated areas that are struggling. Golfers have regularly asked during [USGA Course Consulting Service](#) visits: “Why did this new grass die out so fast?” The answer is likely that the turf was simply not strong enough just yet for traffic and this summer’s highly stressful weather.



This newly renovated bunker looks great, but the sodded area in the fairway hasn’t been given enough time to establish and is struggling.

The follow-up question is usually, “What did we do wrong? We don’t want to invest in another project if this is the outcome!” Chances are that nothing was installed incorrectly. The new turf – whether seeded or sodded – just needed more time to establish and mature before being subjected to traffic and the rigors of summer. Compounding the problem is that during renovations heavy equipment often moves a large volume of soil around, heavily compacts it and disturbs soil structure. Young turf will struggle to grow deep, robust roots in these areas. The newly renovated areas may look great during good growing weather, so it is common to allow cart traffic and routine mowing before the turf is fully ready. When the weather becomes stressful and new turf has not developed enough to perform like mature areas, turf decline or even death can result. While time is necessary to establish newly renovated areas, there are a few tactics to help move things along.

- Durability, density and overall quality of new turf will not improve without nitrogen, but keep it light and frequent.
- Reduce or eliminate traffic on immature turf.
- Eliminate plant growth regulators on newly established areas.
- Disrupt any sod layers or organic matter accumulation

with cultural practices.

- Aerate to improve water infiltration and gas exchange.
- Fracture deep in the profile with solid tines or linear de-compactors prior to seeding or sodding.

The more you can do to bolster turf health in renovated areas this year, the better off you will be next season. Keep this in mind for future renovations as well. Your regional [USGA agronomist](#) is a great resource to help improve turf health and playability while tempering golfer expectations for newly renovated areas.

### Northeast Region Agronomists:

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Brian Gietka, agronomist – [bgietka@usga.org](mailto:bgietka@usga.org)

[Information on the USGA’s Course Consulting Service](#)

## 2024 CPGCSA Golf Championship Winners



Tom Shearer, Tim Riismandel,  
Andrew Harrison, Aaron Schroeder

## October 7, 2024 Meeting

Hanover Country Club  
Host – Bill Brooks

## Career Navigation for Golf Course Superintendents

Your professional reputation carries significant weight to club boards and search committees.

June 2024 | Tom Vlach, CGCS

In the ever-evolving landscape of golf course management, it's crucial to navigate your career path with careful consideration and strategic planning.

Drawing from the collective wisdom of sitting in search committee rooms after having been a golf course superintendent for 30 years, I offer these insights to guide you on your journey:

**Age matters.** Unfortunately, age discrimination is a harsh reality in our industry. To maximize your career trajectory, aim to secure your final position by the age of 48. Have a clear plan in place by the time you reach 50 to ensure you're prepared for any transitions or changes in direction. Ensure you have a backup plan if you cannot secure that final position. Remember, a perceived lack of runway can be a significant barrier to advancement, with some clubs opting to make changes based on age rather than merit. This is especially true before a major renovation project.

**Pedigree means everything.** Your professional lineage and reputation carry significant weight in the eyes of club boards and search committees. Cultivate mentoring solid relationships and strive to align yourself with respected figures in the industry to enhance your credibility and visibility. Working for a successful superintendent who has developed numerous assistants to successful superintendent roles matters in the eyes of a search committee.

**Exercise social media caution.** While social media can be a valuable tool for networking, exercise caution with your online presence. Not one candidate has earned a new position based on their social media profiles, but negative or unprofessional content can lead to elimination from consideration. Avoid self-promotion, mixing family with business, or displaying behaviors that could be perceived as arrogant or unprofessional.

**Professionalism matters.** Maintain high professionalism at all times, both in person and online. Always dress appropriately, with a coat and tie preferred, even on the golf course. Pay attention to your writing skills, ensuring your résumé is error free and accurately represents your qualifications.

**Interview success.** During interviews, focus on building rapport and connecting with interviewers personally. Be likable, avoid negativity or criticism, and engage in meaningful conversation about shared interests or experiences. Leverage your network to have multiple sources vouch for you. Member-to-member endorsements carry the most weight.

**Résumé essentials.** Craft a comprehensive résumé highlighting your team-management, budgeting and project-management skills. Remember, the hiring process isn't over until it's over, so be prepared for reference checks, drug screenings and background checks.

**Embrace speed and long-term thinking.** In a competitive job search, clubs are often hesitant to take chances on superintendents from different climate zones if a local candidate with proven success is available. If you are from a different climate zone, you must show your knowledge in the interview to prove that you can make the transition smoothly.

**Secure a contract.** When making career moves, ensure you have a contract in place to protect your interests for you and the club. The contract is used to clarify expectations from both parties. Do not be afraid to ask for a contract; numerous other departments probably have them.

**Navigating your career as a golf course superintendent** requires a combination of strategic planning, professionalism and networking prowess. Connect with search firms, as they provide valuable information to help you land that next position.

*Tom Vlach, CGCS, a 34-year member of GCSAA, retired at 50 after 29 years as a superintendent. He's the founder of Triumph Group, an executive search firm specializing in the country club and hospitality sectors.*

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# Presidents Message

My wife told me the other day that I had become a turf zombie. She described the symptoms as blank stares, poor listening, mood swings, emotionally unavailable and weight loss. I said maybe I am just identifying as a male. She didn't think that was funny. Its hard to believe managing a golf course can have this much of an effect on us. This is probably true of most disciplines in agriculture. I see some large fields of corn that might be a total loss for some poor soul. There are some seasons that leave a permanent scar on us. This summer alone has been difficult enough let alone the pressure some clubs put on supers with no regard for their personal welfare. Unfortunately we are often the ones who are living out others' bad decisions of the past.

That's enough of my rant. We are about to turn the corner. 2024 has been the year of chaos in every regard but in my opinion the future looks bright! Soon I can stop fantasizing of ways to super cool irrigation water or the golf course being buried in four inches of pea sized hail.

I don't want to wish my life away but it would be cool to wake up tomorrow and it will be October headed to the Hanover CC meeting. I see us blowing off a lot of steam there.

Hang in there everyone!

Pete Ramsey  
Central Penn President



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# June Meeting at Carroll Valley Golf Course



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# Membership News

We would like to welcome the following individuals into our association.

Mark Blest, Associate Brand Manager  
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Kevin Keezer, Sales Rep  
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Jeff Rice, Mid Atlantic Market Specialist  
FMC .....Class AF

Nate Rogers, Sales Rep  
Synatek Solutions .....Class AF

Kevin Rundstrom, Territory Manager  
The Aquatrols Company .....Class AF

Matthew Schifano, Account Manager  
Ewing Outdoor Supply .....Class AF

William Staz, Assistant Superintendent  
Hershey Country Club ..... Class C

Joe Szkalak, Superintendent  
Pilgrims Oak Golf Course..... Class FM

Eli Thompson, Assistant Superintendent  
Lancaster Country Club ..... Class C

Chris Toporski, Territory Rep  
Synatek Solutions .....Class AF

Kyle Woodfield, Superintendent  
Foxchase Golf Club ..... Class A

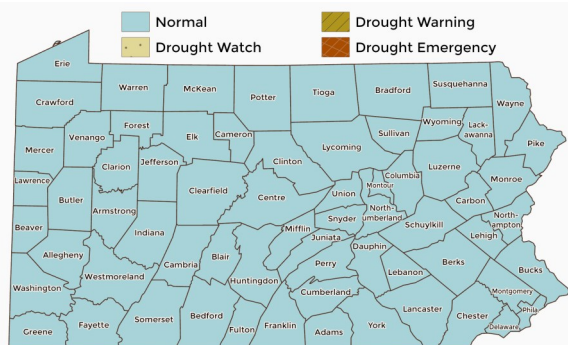
If you know of anyone who is interested in membership into the association, please have them contact Wanda at 717-279-0368 or [cpgcsa@hotmail.com](mailto:cpgcsa@hotmail.com).

Membership information is also available on the Central Penn website at:

[www.cpgcsa.org](http://www.cpgcsa.org)

# Current Drought Declaration Status

8/28/2024



## No ID's Needed for this Group of Central Penn Members



Don Hollinger, Kenny Dietrich, Jim McGall  
Jim MacLaren, Jim Jones

## Fertilizer Law

On July 11, 2022, Pennsylvania enacted a new fertilizer law that updated requirements for both manufacturers and applicators of fertilizer.

- ▣ label modifications
- ▣ fee updates
- ▣ turf nutrient limitations
- ▣ application restrictions

### Who is a Fertilizer Applicator?

The term "applicator" refers to anyone who applies fertilizer, including: lawn care professionals, farmers, and homeowners.

### Calibrate

Follow the directions on the fertilizer label and use a fertilizer spreader that is properly calibrated.

### Know The Rate

Select a fertilizer that is appropriate for the lawn's needs.

Phosphorus can't be applied unless: establishing or repairing turf **OR** a soil test indicates a phosphorus deficiency.

Nitrogen is limited to:

- 0.7 pounds available N per 1000 ft<sup>2</sup>
- 0.9 pounds total N per 1000 ft<sup>2</sup>

Whenever possible, choose an enhanced efficiency fertilizer to ensure nutrients are available when the lawn needs them.

### Environmental Conditions

In order to reduce nutrient loss, applicators of fertilizer must follow these site restrictions.

- Do not apply near waters, storm drains, or drainage ditches
- Maintain a 15-foot buffer from waterways
- Do not apply if heavy rain is expected
- Do not apply if ground is snow-covered or frozen
- Apply product using a properly calibrated fertilizer spreader
- Apply only to intended application site
- Fertilizer that lands on an impervious surface (like roads, sidewalks, driveways) must be swept back onto turf

*It is important to follow all label directions and safety precautions to protect yourself and your lawn.*



[agriculture.pa.gov/fertilizer](http://agriculture.pa.gov/fertilizer)

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## Cultivating Healthy Time-Management Habits

*Truly organized people are made, not born.  
Learn how to develop time-saving management habits.*  
August 2024 | Phil Helmn

If you feel there is never enough time in the day to get all your work done, then finding an effective time-management strategy and technique to get the most out of each day is crucial.

A recent study found that only one in five managers (18%) has a structured time-management system. The remaining managers (82%) simply relied on the least-successful time-management technique of “dealing with whatever comes up as it happens.” The study also found that just 12% of managers felt their work is under control every day.

Regardless of your motivation for improving your time management, implementing some form of process will provide key benefits, including increased productivity, reduced stress, better control of your workflow and more consistently hit deadlines.

Managers experience a wide array of perceived obstacles that reduce their ability to manage time effectively. Fortunately, it is possible to identify and address time-management challenges, which can help optimize productivity. Obstacles and remedies for poor time management include:

**Overbooking.** Although it is often easy to accept new tasks with enthusiasm, sometimes the reality of the time needed to carry out them exceeds the time available. Carefully consider your current workload before taking on new assignments, and ask for an estimate of the time needed to complete the job. Sometimes it’s OK to politely say “no.”

**Not enough rest.** Hard-working individuals sleep fewer hours or choose to avoid breaks in hopes of having extra time. However, reducing rest and/or time off makes you less effective in the long run. Productivity increases with adequate rest, so it is vital you establish a consistent sleep schedule. Consider building breaks into your day.

**Multiple distractions.** Overuse of electronic devices sometimes gets in the way of strong time management. Try distraction-proofing your workspace by using indicators that you are working, such as wearing a set of headphones or closing your door, if appropriate.

**Perfectionism.** Attention to detail can be a valuable asset; however, perfectionism can interfere with productive time management. It can cause you to spend more time than necessary on details that might not have a significant impact on the overall outcome. Try integrating preset success measures into your to-do list.

**Rigid planning.** This can sometimes be as much of a time-management challenge as disorganization. Interruptions will arise throughout the day, even with the best plans in place. Try being mindful of the value of flexibility when unavoidable interruptions arise.

Thanks to Jamie Dennison and his staff for a fun and beautiful day at Carroll Valley Golf Course!



The ability to organize yourself and keep on top of tasks has a major impact on your success, and it can have a knock-on effect for your team. Creating a sense of order and calm for yourself creates a platform for productivity. Really organized people are not usually born organized; they cultivate healthy habits that in time become behaviors that help them stay organized.

My top tips for being organized are:

- Carry a notepad and write things down.
- Follow a routine.
- Make deadlines.
- Don't procrastinate.
- Give everything a home; declutter regularly.
- Keys to building a strong time-management schedule that works for you include:
  - Pay attention to how you feel. Create a workflow that helps you perform your best by matching jobs with your mood and level of motivation.
  - Make mornings effortless. Create a simple set of morning habits that help you establish a reliable starting point each new day.
  - Set priorities for the day. Avoid being distracted by everything you want to do. Identify the top three most important tasks, then schedule enough time to accomplish them.
  - Accomplish challenging tasks first. By getting an important job done early, you give yourself the motivation to keep working. It can also help you be happier at work.

As you begin improving time management and increasing your productivity as a result, try rewarding yourself. Biologically speaking, rewards increase dopamine levels in your brain. Dopamine is a neurotransmitter that helps us feel happy, increases our memory retention, helps us sleep and regulates our mood and appetite. Experiencing this helps us become content and even more productive.

*Phil Helmn, MG, is a four-year GCSAA member with more than 35 years of experience in the golf course management industry. He is a regular speaker on leadership and the author of "The Power of People," which offers tips for managing the modern-day team.*



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## Myth-Busting Heat Illness

Separate facts from fiction when it comes to heat safety on the golf course  
July 23, 2024 | Golf Safety

As the temperatures climb during the sweltering summer months, ensuring that you and your crew stay safe from heat-related illnesses becomes more crucial than ever. At Golf Safety, we believe in arming you with the right knowledge to combat the risks associated with working under the blazing sun. In this article, we're debunking some common myths about heat illness and sun safety, and providing practical advice to keep your crew safe on the course. Let's dive into these misconceptions and set the record straight!



*Heat illness can come on quickly, and requires more than just drinking water to prevent. Photos courtesy of Golf Safety*

### Myth 1: "I'm safe because I'm used to the heat."

It's a common belief that being acclimatized to high temperatures offers immunity from heat-related illnesses. However, no matter how familiar you are with the heat, the risk of heat illness remains high. Paul Watkins, superintendent of River Crest Country Club in Fort Worth, emphasizes the need for continuous reminders and safety training to keep heat safety measures fresh in your crew's minds. "We've got a pretty experienced crew here. They've been here a long time, so they've been through it, but they need to be reminded."

Being accustomed to the heat does not provide immunity. Regular safety training and vigilance in identifying heat illness symptoms are crucial.

### Myth 2: "You can skip sunscreen on cloudy days."

Many people underestimate the power of UV rays on overcast days, leading to inadequate sun protection. The truth is, up to 80% of UV rays can penetrate clouds and cause skin damage. Scott Corwin, director of golf course and landscape maintenance at Timber Pines Golf Course, stresses the importance of continuously checking the UV index throughout the day. "Like a lot of people down here, we watch the weather numerous times throughout the day," Corwin tells us.

To keep your crew safe during the summer months, make sure you consistently check the OSHA Heat Safety Tool app, which shares the real-time heat index, as well as warnings for dangerous temperatures and UV levels. You should also remind your crew to always sunscreen, even on cloudy days. UV rays can still cause significant skin damage and increase the risk of skin cancer.

### Myth 3: "Drinking water is enough to stay hydrated."

While staying hydrated is critical, water alone will not suffice, especially during prolonged exposure to high temperatures. Electrolytes play a vital role in maintaining bodily functions and preventing heat exhaustion. Paul Watkins makes sure his crew has access to electrolyte-rich drinks throughout the day to maintain the balance of essential salts and prevent

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heat-related illnesses. "We encourage coolers with ice water or jugs or whatever they might have," Watkins explains, "And having a ten-gallon thing of Gatorade for them every day, just keep the electrolytes in, it's about all we can do."

### Myth 4: "Heat illness only occurs in extreme heat."

Heat-related illnesses can develop not only in extreme temperatures but also during moderate heat if proper precautions are not taken. Heat stress can occur with low fluid consumption, limited air circulation, and direct sun exposure.



*Heat illness can occur during moderate heat as well as during extreme heat.*

Always be cautious, even on days that don't seem overly hot. Monitor weather conditions on the OSHA Heat Safety Tool app like superintendent Scott Corwin recommends, and adjust work schedules to avoid the hottest part of the day. "We definitely don't push the guys this time of year. We regulate the hours and make sure we're not working in the afternoon during the summer months," he explains. "That really helps a lot to mitigate the risks."

**Myth 5: “You’ll feel heat illness coming on slowly.”**

Heat illness can escalate quickly, often catching individuals off guard. Early symptoms such as dizziness, headaches, or reduced sweating should not be ignored. Paul Watkins recounts a close call with one of his crew members, where early detection of his symptoms helped them prevent a dangerous outcome. “I had a guy who was struggling, so I went and talked to him, and he said that he just stopped sweating,” says Watkins. “He’s like, ‘I was pouring down sweat and he’s like, all of a sudden it stopped. And I knew something was wrong.’”

Stay vigilant for the early signs of heat illness in yourself and others. Symptoms can develop rapidly, so make sure you act immediately.

**Myth 6: “Heat safety training is a one-time thing.”**

A single safety briefing at the start of the season is not enough to ensure continuous heat safety awareness. Paul Watkins highlights the importance of ongoing education: “It’s just the constant reminder. I think we all know heat safety... But the most important thing is just refreshing.”

Incorporate regular reminders and training sessions into your routine to keep heat safety practices current and top of mind for your crew. This approach helps reinforce knowledge and readiness to tackle heat-related risks. Debunking these myths is a critical step toward ensuring the safety of your crew on the golf course during the hot summer months. Equip your team with the right knowledge and tools to combat heat-related illnesses and sun exposure. Remember, consistent training, vigilance, and protective measures are your best defense against the dangers of working in high temperatures.

For more comprehensive training and safety resources, explore [Golf Safety’s](#) range of instructional videos and guidelines to keep your crew safe and productive this summer.

*Editor’s note: The following article was supplied by Golf Safety. All product claims, research cited and other information is directly from the company.*

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## Happy Retirement to Dr. Pete Landschoot

Dr. Landschoot is retiring from Penn State this fall after 35 years as the Extension Turf Specialist at the university.



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### Plan a First Green field trip this school year

With students heading back to school now, it's a great time to plan a First Green field trip. GCSAA has the tools you need to plan and host a successful field trip. Reach out to **Leann Cooper** to request the complete First Green Getting Started Guide, a useful resource to help you start the process.

[Learn more](#)



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## The Green Sheet

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